reducing duties on input raw materials, piece-parts and zero duty on specified list of capital equipments for this sector.

The National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development was set up vide Prime Minister's office Notification No. 360/31/C/10/989-ES. II dated 22.5.598 Government has approved 108 recommendations contained in the first report. The second report deals with the development, manufacture and export of IT hardware whereas the third report deals with long-term National IT policy. The area of microelectronics has been addressed in the third report of the Task Force. Microelectronics covers discrete semiconductor devices as well as semiconductor integrated circuits. The second and third reports of the Task Force are under consideration of the Government. In this context it may also be noted that the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests in its 75th report presented to the Rajya Sabha on 24.4.2000 on the Demands for Grants (2000- 2001) of the Ministry of Information Technology has observed that "while software industry is doint well in the country, there is need to focus attention at hardware production and analyze reasons that tend to block its growth and take remedial steps. The Committee observes the hardware sector is showing reverse trends and as such as made little progress. the Committee, therefore recommends, the Ministry should endeavour to bridge the gap between two sectors by chalking out concrete plans for speedy promotion and development of hardware export in the country".

In addition to the measures relating to policy and fiscal aspects, Government also sponsors research and development and manpower development at academic institutions, R&D laboratories and industry on various aspects of semiconductors. Government has also initiated necessary steps to enact legislation for protection of Intellectual Property Rights of Layout-Design of Semiconductor Integrated Cricuits.

Central legislation on Agricultural Labourers

4928. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government initiated action for enactment of a Central legislation on agricultural labourers in 1993 as recommended by Dr. Ambedkar Birth Centenary Celebration Committee;

(b) if so, the status of the proposed legislation as of now; and

(c) the reasons, if the said legislation has not been enacted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) The proposal for a central legislation for agricultural labour was initiated in 1975 on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Labour.

There was certain reservation expressed by some of the State Governments on some of the components of the draft legislation. As it is the endeavour of the Government to reach a consensus, a Conference of the State Labour Ministers was held on 18.1.2000 in New Delhi when views of the State Governments were obtained. The proposal is being re-examined on the basis of the views/comments of the State Government.

Exclusion of employees under "worker' category

4929. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to remove all employees earning a gross monthly salary of Rs. 10,000 and above from the definition of what is called a "worker' and to repeal the Abolition of Contract Labour Act, 1970;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) what other changes in labour laws and industrial relations laws are contemplated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (c) Amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and to the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 are made keeping in view the requirements of the social partners and a cautious and pragmatic approach is adopted to ensure that the amendments take into consideration the requirements of the social partners, as far as possible.